



MARCHÉ DU FILM
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

PRESS REVIEW
Deadline

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Japan Set As 2026 Country Of Honor At Cannes Marché Du Film

The Cannes Film Festival's [Marché du Film](#) has unveiled [Japan](#) as the Country of Honour for its 2026 edition next May.

The Marché du Film's Executive Director Guillaume Esmiol officially announced the choice at the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) on Tuesday, alongside Junichi Sakomoto, Chair of the Executive Committee for Japan, Country of Honour 2026.

News of the focus was [teased at Tokyo's opening night](#), with a promise of more details during the festival.

As Country of Honour, Japan will open the 2026 edition by co-hosting the Marché du Film's Opening Night and then have a special place in Marché du Film's programs, including its panels, networking events and project showcases putting the spotlight on Japanese animation and genre cinema.

Other key initiatives include a summit on Japan's film industry to foster collaboration and innovation, and a special screening day dedicated to Japanese cinema.

Through its participation, Japan aims to build strong professional networks with the international film community and promote its film and content industries for future success in global markets.

With over 120 years of filmmaking history, Japan stands as one of the world's most influential film nations.

Its legacy spans legendary names such as Kenji Mizoguchi, Yasujiro Ozu and 1980 Cannes Palme d'Or winner Akira Kurosawa to contemporary auteurs such as Hirokazu Kore-eda, Kiyoshi Kurosawa and Naomi Kawase and emerging names such as Chie Hayakawa, who continue to fly the flag in Cannes' Official Selection to this day.

The Marché du Film pointed to the country's robust film industry which it said produced around 1,200 films annually.

It also highlighted the health of its theatrical sector drawing 150 million cinemagoers each year, representing an overall gross of \$1.3, suggesting this demonstrated resilience in an era defined by digitalization and an ever-growing range of entertainment choices.

The 2026 focus will build on Japan's close relationship with the Marché du Film, where Japanese sales companies are among the most established in the Palais des Festivals, while the Japan Pavilion, coordinated by UniJapan, has been a long-standing fixture at the Village International.

““We are truly delighted and proud that Japan has been selected as the Country of Honour. It presents a wonderful opportunity to showcase the appeal of Japanese cinema on a global stage. We look forward



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to seeing Japan's rich film culture, along with its emerging talents and technologies, shine even brighter internationally and contribute to the advancement of cinema both in Japan and around the world," said Sakomoto.

Esmiol added: "Japan holds a unique place in international cinema, and its creative legacy continues to inspire generations of filmmakers. It also holds a unique place at the Marché du Film, as one of the most represented and dynamic countries, with highly active sales companies and producers. On a more personal note: as someone with Japanese roots, it's a beautiful opportunity to pay tribute to my cultural heritage."

Japan's participation will be organized by the Executive Committee for Japan, Country of Honour 2026, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO). Specific program details and participating institutions will be announced in early 2026.

Japan follows Brazil (2025), Switzerland (2024), Spain (2023) and India (2022) as the fifth Country of Honour, an initiative launched by the Marché du Film to recognize nations for their outstanding contributions to the global film industry and to foster international exchange and collaboration.

The 2026 Marché du Film will open May 12 and run until May 20, while the Cannes Film Festival will run until May 23.

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